

REMARKS

This amendment is submitted in response to the Examiner's Action dated October 4, 2004. Applicants have amended the claims to clarify key features of the invention, which overcome the claim rejections. No new matter has been added, and the amendments place the claims in better condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments to the claims. The discussion/arguments provided below reference the claims in their amended form.

IN THE SPECIFICATION/ABSTRACT

In the present Office Action, the abstract of the disclosure is objected to for being too long. Accordingly, Applicants have shortened the abstract to comply with the statutory requirements. Applicants respectfully request entry of the amendments to the abstract.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

At paragraph 5 of the present Office Action, Examiner states that Claims 6-12, 17-18, 26-27 and 30 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended several of the independent claims to clarify specific features related to an access device, which features and clarification thereof places the independent claims in condition for allowance. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request Examiner extend the allowance to include all pending claims.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

At paragraph 3 of the present Office Action, Claims 1-2, 13-14, 19-23 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boe, et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,122,276) in view of *Ferguson, et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,532,241). At paragraph 4 of the present Office Action, Claims 3-5, 15-16, 24-25 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Boe* in view of *Ferguson* and further in view of *Colby, et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,006,264).

Applicants do not concede that the above combinations suggest any of the various features recited by Applicants' claims. However, the rejections are moot in light of the

clarifying amendment to the independent claims, which more completely recite the novel features attributable to the "access device." Claim 1, for example, now recites:

receiving at an access device for said communications network a request from said SNA client for establishing a session with a SNA server that provides services to said SNA client, said request including an identification of the SNA client, said access device being a **separate functional device from said SNA server** and which intercepts session requests from attached SNA clients and **determines** to which SNA server among multiple SNA servers to **forward said session requests** messages, (emphasis added).

While the references generally relate to SNA clients communicating with SNA servers, none of the references teach or suggest the utilization of a separate physical device (Applicants' access device) that performs the claimed receiving, selecting and forwarding features/functions with the aid of specially created server-configuration files. Applicants' Figure 3A clearly illustrates the separate access device, and the functionality associated therewith is clearly recited within the specification (*see*, for example, page 16, lines 25 to page 18, line 17; *see also* page 18, line 28 to page 20, line 10, describing the selection of virtual circuits using the configuration files of each server.

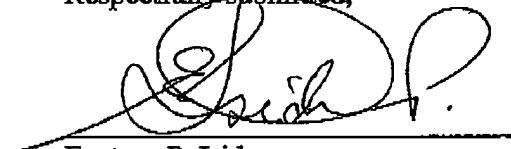
Clearly, the implementation of the access device and functional features associated therewith are not suggested by any of the references, and Examiner's rejection fails to address this deficiency in the references. Thus, since the combinations of references do not suggest key features of Applicants' claimed invention, one skilled in the art would not find Applicants' invention unpatentable over either combination. The above claims are therefore allowable over the combinations.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have diligently responded to the Office Action by amending the abstract to overcome the objections thereto and amending the claims to clarify the novel features contained therein and thus overcome the §103 rejections. Applicants, therefore, respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections and issuance of a Notice of Allowance for all claims now pending.

Applicants further respectfully request the Examiner contact the undersigned attorney of record at 512.343.6116 if such would further or expedite the prosecution of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,



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